



Interview No. SAS9.19.96
Eugene Prettyman

Interviewer: Elizabeth Schaaf
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Q: This is Elizabeth Schaaf interviewing Eugene Prettyman on 19 September, 1996, at his home on Madison Avenue. Well, I wanted to start back from the beginning because you were telling me about where you grew up out in Howard County.

Prettyman: Oh yes.

Q: Now, did you remember the name of the town that?

Prettyman: Well, I think. I'm not sure, but I think our post office was Lisbon. That's not too far away. So it may have been somewhere near Lisbon, but that's as close as I can come right now.

Q: And do you remember the name of the church that you all went to?

Prettyman: Daisy Church.

Q: Daisy Church. And you were telling me about the choir out there. About how they used to sing and how they.

Prettyman: Well, many of those older people couldn't read, you know, but they could learn those notes. And you'd have to hear it to believe it. It's as pretty as it can be when they sing the note names, you know. It's all the different parts, you know, the sopranos and the tenors and so on. And it sounds beautiful.

Q: What kind of music did they sing?

Prettyman: Just church music.

Q: Do you remember any of the hymns that were favorites of yours.

Prettyman: My goodness. No. I can't think of them now. I don't know whether I can [?]. But "That Little Church in the Wildwood," we used to sing that in Sunday school. "Steal Away" was another one.

Q: Oh that's a wonderful song.

Prettyman: And that was a very popular song for some reason or another in the church. And when my mother died there was a guy, member of the church who was a real musician. He was a baritone singer. And he sang that at my mother's funeral. I'll never forget it. My goodness. Too bad it couldn't have been taped. Beautiful.

Q: Did he direct the choir?

Prettyman: No. No. There was. Oh what was her name? It's been so many years now, and as you get older your mind flies off and you don't remember as well as you do when you're younger.

Q: Oh well, it happens to me.

Prettyman: Oh. Mr. Hammond I think it was. Mr. Hammond. Little fellow. He was the choir director.

Q: Did you sing in the choir?

Prettyman: No. I didn't sing in the choir. I was too little.

Q: Now, when did your family leave Howard County?

Prettyman: Well, some of us stayed there for a long time, but some of us came to Baltimore back in, during the war.

Q: During World War I, II?

Prettyman: One.

Q: One.

Prettyman: And then we went back. So we were sort of living between two places you might say. Because we were still doing farm work up there, and still having work in the city.

Q: Oh my goodness.

Prettyman: So like everybody in the country, you sell your farm so you can go to town. It's a mistake.

Q: So your family knew better than to do that.

Prettyman: But they did it finally.

Q: They did it?

Prettyman: Yes.

Q: When did they do that?

Prettyman: That must have been about, oh, in. It must have been around 1912 I guess. I imagine it was around that time.

Q: And then where did you all settle here in town?

Prettyman: Well, we came in here, and we settled on a little street on west side, White Street. Excuse me, it's called Loretta Avenue now. It was White Street then. There were just two blocks of it.

Q: What drew your family to town?

Prettyman: I don't know. My mother, her people were from Washington. They came from Washington to Baltimore, and I think that's where my father met my mother. And he used to come down here to see her before they got married. And I imagine that's why we finally moved together, you know. But so far back, and I was so little, but I remember all of that.

Q: Now where did you go to school when you were living here?

Prettyman: Oh when I came, after here, I went to the little schoolhouse up there, and then when I came here I went to finish elementary school at School 100 on Ann Street.

Q: Okay.

Prettyman: In those days, you had eight grades. You didn't have junior high, and then you went from there to high school.

Q: And you went to high school?

Prettyman: Here at Douglass.

Q: At Douglass.

Prettyman: Yeah. Douglass then was out on.

Q: Pennsylvania.

Prettyman: Yeah, Pennsylvania and [?] pit.

Q: What was your school like in Howard County? How big was that?

Prettyman: As big as this room. I guess as big as both of these rooms. But the most amazing thing, and I tell my friends and always told them, I got my real education in the little schoolhouse

in the back woods. It's surprising how everybody wants to learn, and the teacher has, I guess she has four or five different groups at different levels, and she's teaching them all. She has no problem with anybody and everybody learns.

I used to tell my friends, I got my learning in that little schoolhouse because this school was different. And your college was even different. I know when I was at NYU, I had a number instead of a name.

Q: Right. I understand that. [Laughter]

Prettyman: But I enjoyed that little red schoolhouse. And they're all gone now. But you got some real learning there, some real teaching. Yes you did.

When I came to town, well they'd call anybody up in my group, we were good readers already. Because one thing you had to do, you had to read and you had to be able to count. And you had to write. Oh write, write, write.

Q: And they probably made sure that you could write beautifully.

Prettyman: So you could understand.

Q: So you could read it.

Prettyman: Did you know that I had met youngsters in high school here of late who can't write their names so you can read them? They write them, but you can't read what it is.

Q: I'm afraid my handwriting is almost that bad.

Prettyman: Well, mine's gone backwards. But we all had good handwriting because you had to have good handwriting.

Q: We used to have to learn the Palmer method.

Prettyman: Oh yes indeed. And you had to hold that pen just so.

Q: Just right.

Prettyman: And those old straight pens.

Q: Oh that's right. I forgot about those.

Prettyman: Oh yes. And ink wells.

Q: And they always messed up your clothes.

Prettyman: And they always got it in your hands too.

Q: It was terrible.

Prettyman: But I tell friends now when they say, young friends, you know, and I say you should have lived in the days when I was a youngster because there were so many things. All these modern things we have now we didn't need anyway. We had such a good life. I mean a really good life. And I miss it. I'd like to go back to it now.

I've been lots of time out of the woods now. I married a girl from Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Q: Where did you meet her?

Prettyman: Met her, met here at school. She came up here to live with her aunt, and she didn't know anything about country. See she lived with her grandfather because her parents were dead. And he was a contractor. And besides in those days, the Negroes were the guys who did the work, and he was a big contractor. You know. And he helped to build the University of Alabama.

Q: Oh my goodness.

Prettyman: Yeah. And so when she came here and we got friendly, she didn't like the country. Cause she wasn't used to it. She was in the city all the time. And I didn't like the city. I still don't like it. So you know what we did? We bought this house and we bought a small place up in the hills. So as she says we tell our friends, now my husband can be happy because he can go up there in the woods. But she would go up, you know. We'd go up and stay part of the time, and stay down here part of the time.

She was a wonderful person. I kept her sixty-four years, and I didn't get rid of her. She just left. And I miss her.

Q: I bet.

Prettyman: Because got along so well, you know. We thought alike. Some of our friends said we even started looking alike.

Q: Well, you know that happens. Isn't that funny how that works?

Prettyman: And my daughter who lives with me now. You see that fireplace is closed. She used to sit on that hassock and watch the fire. She loved to sit there and watch the fire. And when she died, I closed it, and I didn't tell my daughter why I closed it. But she keeps asking me, daddy, it'll be summer again, she died two years ago, and you haven't had any fire in the fireplace. I said, oh, I'll get around to it. It's got to be cleaned out. It's cleaned out. They come and clean it every year.

But you know when you get old, you get strange notions. I figure like if I started that fire in there, she would come sit on that hassock. Isn't that ridiculous?

Q: How old was your daughter when she passed away?

Prettyman: Oh she was about fifty.

Q: It's so hard to lose a child. And you had two?

Prettyman: Two.

Q: Two daughters. And one is living with you?

Prettyman: And one with me.

Q: And one with you.

Prettyman: Yes.

Q: And doing well.

Prettyman: Doing well. Oh she's talking about retiring. I think I told you, she's the [?] department of [?]. And she's getting ready to retire. She comes down when she gets a break and we keep a place, one of the apartments up there for her.

Q: Now, I would love for you to tell me how you got involved in music when you were a kid?

Prettyman: I guess really the way I got involved was I was always getting involved. In the back woods everybody sang. After supper, the dishes were washed, the girls washed the dishes, you'd go into the dining room and you'd do your homework and then you'd sing. My mother would get the organ, you know, the one man organ. I wish you could see one of these pipe organs. Cause we just had one then. They didn't have any big organs. She'd get to the organ, and we'd all sing. We just grew up singing.

You know, music, was, I guess music was the part I guess for most people. You know, we didn't have much else except on Saturdays in the summertime there were picnics.

Q: Where did you go for picnics?

Prettyman: Well to the church. To the little church. It was always at the church.

Q: So you'd spend the whole day there?

Prettyman: Oh, all day. Yeah.

Q: Right after the service, you'd go out for picnics.

Prettyman: Yeah. Only trouble we had was on Sunday afternoons, we'd have to leave right at the time everything was going so well, come back and milk cause we still had cows to milk.

Q: I remember that.

Prettyman: I had a sister who could milk with two fingers. I don't know how because we'd milk with our whole hand. She'd milk with her two fingers, and she could out-milk anybody.

Q: Some people have a real touch.

Prettyman: Yeah.

Q: I was never good at that. I just never could quite get the hang of it.

Prettyman: Yeah.

Q: And I tried really, really hard, but I just couldn't do it. I mean I could do it, but you could tell the cows were not happy with me. [Laughter]

Prettyman: We used to like milking in the wintertime because then you could stick your hand up against the warm flank and keep warm. In the summertime, she's swishing her tail, they're flies.

Q: Banging you in the head.

Prettyman: Oh, it's awful. But if I had to do, be responsible for directing people, I'd say everybody has to be born in the country and have country experience and then come to town.

Q: I think that's a wonderful idea.

Prettyman: Because I think there's a good background, a good start.

Q: Well, what grade did you go into when you came to town? Do you remember?

Prettyman: In the third grade.

Q: In the third grade. So you really have some good years in.

Prettyman: Oh yes.

Q: And did you find that you were farther ahead than the kids in the city schools?

Prettyman: Well, I could outread anybody in the class. And we call it numbers, and I could outstrip them in numbers. There were other things they were ahead of me. But these were two things that I guess most country children were good at those things. And spelling, oh we could spell. We'd have to line up and spell. And then the boys used to try to outspell the girls. One thing's the girls really good, they always wrote better than we did. We wrote well, I think we wrote well, but they could always beat us in handwriting. We used to fight over it.

Q: Well, what was it like when you went to Douglass? Was it very different from going to the [?] Street School.

Prettyman: Well, it was different in as much as you'd go from one class to another in different subjects you know. Whereas in [?] Street, you know, you were in elementary grade. It was all in one room.

Q: Oh.

Prettyman: Well, what I mean, I don't mean one teacher had all the grades at once.

Q: But you were in the same classroom all day.

Prettyman: Yes. And I'd go to your class for something and another class for something. Whereas, I mean another teacher, not another class. You taught all the subjects when I was in your class. When I went to the next teacher, she taught all the subjects. Whereas in high school, you go by subject.

Q: Now, and who was teaching music then at Douglass?

Prettyman: Oh, Mr [W. Llewellyn] Wilson.

Q: Mr. Wilson. And tell me what his classes were like and tell me what he was like.

Prettyman: He was, he was a rascal, that's what he was. But you know before he went to Douglass, he taught me math in elementary school.

Q: No, I didn't know that.

Prettyman: Yeah. He was a math teacher.

Q: Oh for heaven's sakes.

Prettyman: But he would get up there, you know, we'd get ready to have a music lesson, and he'd have to tell a joke. And he could tell a joke, and you had better not laugh. And you couldn't help but laugh. [Laughter] He knew you couldn't. And he would lecture us about that, you know, and then everybody would get quiet and then you'd get into the music. But he had a great sense of humor. He did. But he was a good math teacher.

Q: Now, you had, there were a lot of musicians who came out of his classes that got acquainted with music with Mr. Wilson.

Prettyman: I guess just about everybody, not everybody, most of the guys who wanted him. Most of them wanted exposure to music.

Q: Can you remember some of the ones who went on to be career musicians?

Prettyman: Well, Red Readlin, Mark Fax became a great organist. He made national history.

Q: Now tell me his name again.

Prettyman: Mark Fax.

Q: F A

Prettyman: F A X. And I think it had an e on the end there. I'm not quite sure, but I think it did. And Red Readlin. There was a guy named Melbourne. He played piano. He was good at it. Then I mentioned Avon Long.

Q: And Anne Brown.

Prettyman: Yeah. We were classmates.

Q: Oh, you were classmates with Anne Brown?

Prettyman: Yes.

Q: Oh my goodness.

Prettyman: We used to go to her, she lived down on Madison Avenue, and used to go down there supposedly to study our homework. We'd go in there, and she'd get to the piano and we'd sing. And her mother would stand at the front window and watch for her father. Old Dr. Brown wouldn't have any of that in his house. And we'd have a good time. And then when she saw him coming, she'd let us know. And when he'd get in, we'd all be studying, you know. [Laughter]

But you know, youngsters in those days didn't get into any kind of trouble. We did funny things like that, you know, but we didn't get in any trouble.

Q: Well, if that's the worse the kids today did, we'd all be in a whole lot better situation right now.

Prettyman: That's right. That's right. But Anne was a, she had a voice.

Q: What was she like as a person?

Prettyman: She had a keen sense of humor. She liked jokes. You wouldn't think she'd even been to the Juilliard School of Music. She was just like she was in high school. But she was singing concerts. Off the stage she was just like she was in high school. The same way. We called her Annie.

Q: That's wonderful. Now is she still living in Norway, and I've been trying to track her down. I cannot find, apparently a lot of people have lost track of her. But I've been anxious to get her on the phone to talk with her. I haven't had a chance to do that yet.

Prettyman: She used to come here on occasion. We have a mutual friend, and she used to stay at her husband's when she came. She may know her address. If I can find her and find out where she is. Because I know she's still somewhere in town, and I'll see if I can find her. Because if she still knows, because they kept in close contact.

Q: Now, back to your career. When did you start playing? You were playing French horn and.

Prettyman: Well, I started French horn when my brother organized his band. That was back in the early '20s. But I also, we had a second group. And I think I told you, the guy who sang bass was sick, and we had to go and sing on WNBR.

Q: Was this Icy Hots Band?

Prettyman: No, not Icy Hots.

Q: What was the name of this group?

Prettyman: Did we have, I don't think we had. What did we call it? Some kind of symphonics, but it had nothing to do with symphonics, but that was in the title that we had. I don't recall exactly what it was. But anyway, I lost my voice because I tried to fill in for the bass singer. And not only did I lose my singing voice, I couldn't even talk after that.

But I went in with my brother there for the French horn when he organized his band back in the early '20s. And then I was afraid, trying to blow that horn wouldn't help my throat any, you know, having almost destroyed it anyway. So then I got interested in what today they call swing music. So I studied the tenor banjo under a guy named, what was his name, Ed Gasney. And his double bass [words drowned out by outside noise].

Q: Now, there was a person, who was Murray, Mr. Murray?

Prettyman: Oh Happy Murray.

Q: Yes. Tell me about him.

Prettyman: He was the guy who got us organized for this [?] quintet. And he sponsored us so to speak. He was our manager. He was the one who set up the engagements in the theaters and we played. And one time Cab Calloway was a friend of ours. He went on with us once down in Atlantic City, and I'll never forget it. And I used to tell him, after that, I said, Cab, I hope the people enjoyed your singing because they sure couldn't hear the instruments. [Laughter]

Well, he had a voice. He had some voice. He died just recently. I saw him two years ago. I said, Cab, when are you coming home? He said, ah, he said, I'm not coming home, and he didn't.

Q: Where was he, where did he sing and play when he was a youngster?

Prettyman: Mostly in New York and Chicago. See, he had a sister who was in music [Blanche Calloway], and that's what got him into it. She had a band out in Chicago.

Q: Oh, that's right.

Prettyman: And he had another sister in Philadelphia.

Q: So what happened to the Icy Hots? First of all, how did you all get, I mean, how did you get organized, where did all this happen, where did you rehearse?

Prettyman: Well, we rehearsed at one another's houses. But Mr. Murray heard us playing. We just played for fun. He heard us playing and that's when he got us interested in going on the road with him. So he managed us. But before that we used to play around. We played for dances, what we called in those days hops. You know, you're having a dance, we'd go play for the dance. You're having a party, we'd go play for the party. Little things like that. And he heard us playing, and got interested in us.

But what happened to us is we came out of school and went on the tour. So we decided with some encouraging from our parents and grown-ups, we'd better just get back to school and finish that and then do it. So we folded up and went back to school. But we used to get together.

Q: So you still continued to play?

Prettyman: Yeah. We came off the circuit, but we continued to play.

Q: Now you played in Atlantic City, and where else did you play?

Prettyman: Yeah, we played in Atlantic City, we played in Philadelphia, we played in Pennsylvania, and we played in two theaters here. Remember the old Maryland Theater?

Q: Oh yes.

Prettyman: We played there, and we played, at that time they had the vaudeville in the Regent, which was a [?], and we played there.

Q: What was it like playing vaudeville?

Prettyman: Well, we were a little nervous. And this is what got us to feeling really at home. You know, we said, we're gonna make mistakes with all those people out there. So we called up Hank. So Hank says, let me tell you something. You look out there and you tell me how many people you can see. You don't see anybody because the lights are on your. He said don't forget that. And he said, and if you made a mistake, they don't know you made a mistake. They came to listen. So you play.

Q: That's good advice.

Prettyman: Well, we weren't too bad. I don't think we made any mistakes, but, you know, we were a little skittish at first, you know, thinking about all those hundreds of people sitting out there. Scared to death. But once we got so. As he said, you out there in the dark. You don't even know anybody's out there. So we got started.

But this boy Avon Long, he had a voice. He really did. So he stuck at it until he died.

Q: And you mentioned that his brother was talented.

Prettyman: Yeah, Louis. Yeah. He's still living around here someplace. He could sing better than Avon could, but Avon got into public because of breaks.

Q: And is he the one who became a minister, Louis Long?

Prettyman: No.

Q: No.

Prettyman: Did one of them? No, not one of them.

Q: Well, what did Louis go on to be, the one with the lovely voice?

Prettyman: The lovely voice, he sang with a church quartet for a while, and got a job at the post office. A lost voice. Cause he could sing, he could sing.

Q: And then you were all, even though you were kids, you were invited to go to the parties afterwards?

Prettyman: Oh yes. Yes.

Q: Now, were the folks in vaudeville welcoming about the, you know, the youngsters coming in on the circuit?

Prettyman: They don't even notice that you're youngsters. Everybody is buddy buddy. Buddy buddy. The only thing, I think I told you, the only thing that bothered us cause theater people I found out usually get together after the thing is over. And just mingle, not a party, they mingle and they eat and all that kind of thing. And we got our first smell of marijuana, and we had never smelled it before because we had never been in a situation like that. So we went to two parties, and then we didn't go to anymore. We never did go to another one because each one had that strange odor. We found out later on it was marijuana. We didn't know what it was.

Q: So then you decided to listen to your parents and.

Prettyman: Yeah, we all went back to school.

Q: All of you went back.

Prettyman: All of us went back to school. Except Avon. Avon stayed in with it, and he went on to big time.

Q: So where, you hadn't finished up Douglass at that point?

Prettyman: No, we hadn't finished up.

Q: So you went back and finished. Went back and had music lessons with Mr. Wilson again?

Prettyman: Yeah.

Q: What did he have to say?

Prettyman: He used to laugh at us. You're back. [Laughter] He was something, but we loved him. I think all the youngsters did.

Q: Everybody always spoke so highly of him.

Prettyman: I don't know how my brother got next to it, but he went down there as a, as he said, they called into his office, and when he came out he had the contract to play [?].

Q: Well, I was very interested to hear that he was the one who started up that band.

Prettyman: Oh yes.

[Interruption — Tape resumes with discussion of band concerts in Druid Hill Park]

Prettyman: And I have a band, why don't you give me a contract to play for the Negroes.

Q: Did you all use the same bandstand?

Prettyman: No.

Q: Okay. Where did you all?

Prettyman: They set up a stand for us. Of course, they set up one for the white orchestra too, but it was over there in that circle. What we called the music circle. That's where they played all the time.

Q: And that's over at the end of the.

Prettyman: End of the causeway, what do you call it?

Q: Behind the conservatory.

Prettyman: Yeah. That's right. That's right. That's where they played all the time. We played back over near what used to be the colored playground. They would set up the.

Q: Okay. I know where it is.

Prettyman: They would set up the structure there.

Q: Now, that's over where they have the city gardens and not far from the cemetery.

Prettyman: Not far. That's right. Yeah, that's where it used to be. You know, I haven't been up there in years.

Q: Oh, I'm up there all the time because I have a city garden.

Prettyman: We used to have a garden out there during the war.

Q: Really?

Prettyman: My wife, I tell you, we used to give food to the neighbors. We had so much. Do you know, nobody bothered anything.

Q: Oh, they still don't bother anything. But now they've got a great big fence around it.

Prettyman: When we bought this house, I put a two foot wall, and a two foot picket on top of it. Two fish ponds with spray heads in them at night. Don't you know they destroyed them? They destroyed them. Isn't that something? You can't believe it.

Q: I know.

Prettyman: You wouldn't believe it. I wouldn't believe it, but I have pictures of it where it used to be. But it's a shame and unfortunate. My gate's broken. The reason it's broken is they couldn't get it off. Two houses up the street and another one down the street have lost the gates because they cut them off.

We never had anything like that around here. I think it must be people passing through to the park or going to the park or something like that.

Q: Well, now let me see, where were we? You were, you had gone back to Douglass, and Mr. Wilson had.

Prettyman: And he laughed at us, but we didn't laugh back at him. [Laughter] But we kept on playing, you know, while we were at school. And we played for parties, you know, and little dances here and there. You know, that was our.

Q: So what happened when you graduated from Douglass? Where did you go after that?

Prettyman: I went right to Morgan [State College].

Q: You went to Morgan.

Prettyman: Went to Coppin State first. After that I went to Morgan.

Q: Were you involved in the music program at Morgan?

Prettyman: No. My daughter was. She was there. Yeah. The one that lives with me. But she was a member of the choir when she was there.

Q: Who had the choir then?

Prettyman: Oh, what was that man?

Q: Was it Nate Carter? No, it was before Nate.

Prettyman: No. It was before Carter. What was his name? It may come to me.

Q: Okay. Well, so then after Morgan you went up to New York.

Prettyman: Then I went to New York.

Q: Now, did you stay involved in music all this time?

Prettyman: Oh, only for fun.

Q: Just for fun.

Prettyman: Yeah.

Q: What about your brother? How did he come to organize the Masonic band? Or did he organize it?

Prettyman: He organized it. Yeah.

Q: He did that. When did he do that?

Prettyman: He decided, I don't know when. I know it was back in the early '20s that he started, but I don't know what gave him the first thought. The first think I knew he was going to Mr. Thomas and taking whatever courses they give for music, director of music. Then when he finished that, he organized this band.

Q: Did you study with A. Jack Thomas too?

Prettyman: I studied the double bass with him.

Q: So you both were going to see him?

Prettyman: Yeah. He was a very down to earth fellow.

Q: Where was his school?

Prettyman: Down on Druid Hill Avenue.

Q: On Druid Hill Avenue.

Prettyman: Let's see what was that school called?

Q: The Aeolian?

Prettyman: The Aeolian, that's it.

Q: Now he was just, must have been a remarkable man.

Prettyman: He was. He was.

Q: And was he also conducting one of the city bands?

Prettyman: Not at that time.

Q: Not at that time, but earlier.

Prettyman: Yeah, earlier he did.

Q: And Mr. Harris was.

Prettyman: Mr. Harris took over my brother's band when he left.

Q: Okay. And then it looked like for a while there there were two bands. That Mr. Harris had one.

Prettyman: The, what was his name? I think the guy who had the new Albert Auditorium over there on Pennsylvania Avenue. That fellow had a band, but for the life of me I don't know what his name was. There were two bands. And then we had, we had several orchestras.

Q: What were the names of the orchestras?

Prettyman: Oh the [?] was one.

Q: And were they like a dance orchestra?

Prettyman: Yeah.

Q: Dance orchestra.

Prettyman: Yeah. And there was the Gibson orchestra. They both played for dances.

Q: Oh this was Mr. Gibson, Mr. Isaah Gibson.

Prettyman: Yeah. And then we had one who played at the Royal Theater, but I don't know what his name was. His band played there. Of course, because they had music, they had music before the shows. I can't think of his name.

Q: I can do it backwards. Let's see. There was Tracy McCleary.

Prettyman: Tracy was up there. Tracy played there. Yeah.

Q: Yeah. He's still in town. And then before him there was Bubby Johnson.

Prettyman: Yeah. Bubby Johnson was. Bubby was a good man for. He was a neat fellow.

Q: What kind of music did he play?

Prettyman: He played saxophone.

Q: He played saxophone and what kind of music did they play?

Prettyman: Dance music.

Q: Swing, jazz.

Prettyman: Swing music, yeah.

Q: Swing music. Do you remember, did he have a signature tune that was like the best thing the band played?

Prettyman: I don't recall that he had a signature.

Q: And then before him there was what, Rivers Chambers, and then I don't know who was before Rivers Chambers.

Prettyman: I don't either.

Q: That's about as far back as I can.

Prettyman: Rivers Chambers had a real band. He was a real.

Q: Oh I remember the band. Because he used to play for school dances at Talcom [?] High School, and my mother and father were great Rivers Chambers fans. They would go anywhere to

hear that orchestra, that wonderful smooth sound of his that they just loved. And that song that they used to play, that everybody always used to.

Prettyman: Yeah. And we went, back in those days we used to have excursions down to a place called Brown's Grove. Captain Brown owned a boat. But we'd go down there, three or four of his musicians would go down on the boat and play. And I can remember them now. When you mentioned that sound, I could. And there was a [?] also sang, and he would sing and there were lots of songs.

Q: Do you remember a skit he used to do, Good Morning Judge?

Prettyman: No. I don't remember that.

Q: He used to put on a bandanna and have a. It was just, he was real funny.

Prettyman: No. I missed that.

Q: I mean, he had Mr. Brown who played guitar, and then he took over after Mr. Chambers passed.

Prettyman: Yeah. He was stricken while he was playing. One of the members of my church played drums with him, and Tee Loggins was a classmate of mine.

Q: Really?

Prettyman: Yeah. Played saxophone.

Q: Oh my gosh.

Prettyman: And they stayed together. But the band never was [?] because they all felt so bad. You know, with him gone, they just didn't want to play.

Q: What a wonderful, wonderful personality he had. He was just wonderful. Got along with everybody and felt at home with everybody and everybody felt at home with him.

Prettyman: That's right. You'd think he was one of the relatives.

Q: Yeah. Yeah.

Prettyman: He'd fit right in.

Q: What was Mr. Loggins like?

Prettyman: He was a joyful fellow too. He was pretty much like Rivers Chambers. Big smile, never a frown on his face, and he could sing. He played saxophone, but he could sing too.

Q: And you talked about. Yeah, tell me about Brown's Grove because I've seen a lot of references to that, and even I found an old reference, I mean an old newspaper that Mr. Wilson even played down at Brown's Grove on that, on that excursion boat that went down there.

Prettyman: Well, see they were in the segregated days. We couldn't go to the parks around here. Captain Brown owned that place down there, Brown's Grove, and he had it set up like a little Coney Island. All that stuff around there, you know, games and all that. And he owned the boat, he and Langley, there was two of them, owned the boat between them, and they ran excursions down there.

I don't even know when he got rid of it. Somebody asked me a couple of years ago about it, and all of a sudden I realized we don't have Brown's Grove anymore.

Q: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know.

Prettyman: Oh it was for years, years. And all the churches would go down there every summer. Yes. So he was a fine fellow too. You could see when you were down on the boat the people coming down Broadway, coming down to the dock, and sometimes they would be late, and they would start running. You would see them running down Broadway. And when it was time to go, he'd blow that whistle and he'd leave them there. And they'd come running. [Laughter] He could have waited another five minutes, but he was like that. He was like that. Miss those things.

Q: Well, I remember going over to Tolchester. Have the excursions over to Tolchester.. And that was a rare treat going over there. And where was Brown's Grove located?

Prettyman: We used to go down past, let's see, what's that fort down there? There's a fort down there.

END OF INTERVIEW